

7. Lord Caitanya and sankirtan

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the golden avatara, appeared in India nearly five hundred years ago. It is the custom in India that when a child is born, an astrologer is called for. When Lord Krsna, the supreme personality of Godhead, appeared five thousand years ago, Gargamuni was called by His father, and he said, “This child formerly incarnated in three complexions, such as red and golden, and now He has appeared in blackish color.” Krsna’s color is described in the scriptures as blackish, just like the color of a cloud. Lord Caitanya is understood to be Krsna appearing in golden complexion.

There is much evidence in Vedic literature that Caitanya Mahaprabhu is an incarnation of Krsna, and this is confirmed by scholars and devotees. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam it is confirmed that the incarnation of Krsna, or God, in this present age, Kali-yuga, will always engage in describing Krsna, He is Krsna, but as a devotee of Krsna He describes Himself. And in this age His bodily complexion will not be blackish.

Another feature of this avatara is that He is always accompanied by His associates. Krsna, or God, comes with two missions: to give protection to the devotees and to destroy the demons. In this age Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s mission is also like that: to deliver the devotees and to annihilate the nondevotees, the demons. But in this age He has a different weapon. That weapon is not a club or disc or lethal weapon- His weapon is the *Sankirtana* movement. He killed the demonic mentality of the people by introducing the *Sankirtana* movement. Therefore, in the Srimad-Bhagavatam it is said that this is the incarnation of God in this age. And who worships Him? The process is very simple. Just keep a picture of Lord Caitanya with His associates. Lord Caitanya is in the middle, accompanied by His principal associates- Nityananda, Advaita, Gadadhara, and Srivasa.

Anyone can have His picture in his home, chant this Hare Krsna mantra, and thus worship Lord Caitanya. That is the simple method. But who will capture this simple method? Those who have good brains. Without much bother, if one simply keeps a picture of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu at home and chants Hare Krsna, then one will realize God.

In this age, those who have sufficient intelligence take to this *Sankirtana* movement, and they advance very quickly. Lord Caitanya is called, “the golden avatara.” Avatara means “descending, coming down.” Just as one may come down from the fifth story or the one-hundredth story of the building, an avatara comes down from the spiritual planets in the spiritual sky.

The avatara for this age, Lord Caitanya, is described in Vedic literature. We cannot accept anyone as an avatara unless he has the symptoms described in the scriptures. Krsna Himself came to teach us how to surrender. His last instruction in the Bhagavad-gita is to surrender, but people – mudhas, rascals said, “Why should I surrender?” Therefore, although Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Krsna Himself, this time He teaches us practically how to execute the mission of the bhagavad-gita.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu gives us the opportunity to reach God directly. When Rupa Goswami, the principal disciple of Lord Caitanya offered a nice prayer to Lord Caitanya. This prayer says:

*Namo maha-vadanyaya / Krsna-prema-pradaya te
Krsnaya Krsna-caitanya-Namne gaura-tvise namah*

My dear Lord, You are the most munificent of all the incarnations.” Why? Krsna-prema-pradaya te: “You are directly giving love to God. You have no other purpose. Your process is so nice that one can immediately learn to love God. Therefore You are the most munificent of all incarnations. And it is not possible for any personality other than Krsna Himself to deliver this benediction; therefore I say that You are Krsna.” Krsnaya Krsna-caitanya-namne: “You are Krsna, but you have assumed the name Krsna Caitanya. I surrender unto You.”

So this is the process. Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Krsna Himself, and He is teaching how to develop love of God by a very simple method. He says simply to chant Hare Krsna.

*Harer nama harer nama / Harer namaiva kevalam
Kalam nasy eva nasy eva / Nasty eva gatir anyatha*

“In this age, simply go on chanting the Hare Krsna mantra. There is no other alternative.”

The chanting process offered by Lord Caitanya for achieving love of God is called *sankirtana*. *sankirtana* is a Sanskrit word. Sam means samyak-“complete.” And *kirtana* means “glorifying” or “describing.” So complete

description means complete glorification of the Supreme, or the Supreme Complete Whole. It is not that one can describe anything or glorify anything and that will be *kirtana*. From the grammatical point of view that may be *kirtana*, but according to Vedic system, *kirtana* means describing the supreme authority, the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is called *kirtana*.

(Adapted from Science of Self realization Chapter 5 – The appearance of Lord Caitanya)

Discovery

1. Who is an avataar?
2. How can we understand a person is avataar?
3. Why does Krsna come as an avatar?

Understanding

1. Why is Caitanya Mahaprabhu considered an avataar?
2. What do you understand by Demoniac mentality?
3. What is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's medicine for the Demoniac mentality?
4. What is the meaning of *sankirtana*? What is its aim?
5. What type of people will take up to the process of *sankirtana*? Why?

Application

1. Do you feel that "Love of God" is the topmost aim of life? Why or why not?
2. Have you experienced any change in your life since you have started attending this program?
3. Do you agree that all of us have partly demoniac mentalities? What steps can you take to purify your mind?

SRI NAMAMRTA

Krsna came again as Lord Caitanya to teach us the path by which to cross the ocean of Kali-yuga:

When Krsna appeared, He gave His orders (He asked all living entities to surrender unto Him), and when Krsna Himself appeared as a devotee, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He showed us the path by which to cross the ocean of Kali-yuga. That is the path of the Hare Krsna movement. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared, He ushered in the era for the saṅkīrtana movement. Chanting of the Hare Krsna mahā-mantra is potent always, but it is especially potent in this age of Kali. Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī, while instructing Mahārāja Parīkṣit, stressed this chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra.

**kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann / asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya / mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet**

"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is full of faults, there is still one good quality about this age. It is that simply by chanting the Hare Krsna mahā-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom."

(S.B. 12.3.51)

PREACHING IS THE ESSENCE

The main business of a preacher is to introduce saṅkīrtana:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most benevolent personality in human society because His only desire is to make people happy. His saṅkīrtana movement is especially meant for the purpose of making people happy. Cc. Ādi 9.45

Although Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees in disciplic succession can defeat all kinds of learned scholars, scientists and philosophers in arguments, thus establishing the supremacy of the Personality of Godhead, their main business as preachers is to introduce saṅkīrtana everywhere. Simply to defeat scholars and philosophers is not the occupation of a preacher. Preachers must simultaneously introduce the saṅkīrtana movement, for that is the mission of the Caitanya cult. (CC. Ādi 16.8)